

**EXAMINING the RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
LACK OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING  
AND SYSTEMIC POVERTY AND NEGATIVE  
ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SOUTHWEST  
MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITIES**

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**MERGING RURAL SOUTHWEST MISSISSIPPI POPULATIONS  
AND ADVANCED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING TO  
CREATE SUSTAINABLE AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE  
COMMUNITIES**

# UNEMPLOYMENT & POVERTY

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**Chronically high unemployment and pervasive poverty are not merely aberrations in rural Southwest Mississippi; here these issues are stark, evident and poignant facts of life. Nowhere in the United States is the situation regarding chronic, systemic high unemployment and stifling pervasive poverty more prevalent than in Southwest Mississippi.**

**For this project five counties will be examined: Adams, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson & Wilkinson.**

# UNEMPLOYMENT & POVERTY RATES

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**JEFFERSON COUNTY 25.7% #1 MS**

**CLAIBORNE COUNTY 21.2 #4 MS**

**WILKINSON COUNTY 17.5%**

**ADAMS COUNTY 14.9%**

**FRANKLIN COUNTY 11.2%**

**JEFFERSON COUNTY 49.7% #1 MS**

**CLAIBORNE COUNTY 44.0% #2 MS**

**ADAMS COUNTY 34.3%**

**WILKINSON COUNTY 32.8%**

**FRANKLIN COUNTY 16.5%**

# SOUTHWEST MS DEMOGRAPHICS

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<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>63,014</b>	
<b>AFRICAN-AMERICAN</b>	<b>38,896.935</b>	
<b>WHITE</b>	<b>22,921.132</b>	
<b>MALE</b>	<b>32,102.77</b>	<b>(50.94%)</b>
<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>30,915.95</b>	<b>(49.06%)</b>
<b>PER CAPITA INCOME:</b>		
<b>ADAM</b>	<b>\$17,851</b>	<b>JEFFERSON \$13,374</b>
<b>CLAIBORNE</b>	<b>\$13,503</b>	<b>WILKINSON \$13,231</b>
<b>FRANKLIN</b>	<b>\$22,769</b>	

# TECHNOLOGY OCCUPATIONS

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<b>Field</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Software Development Coding, Applications</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
<b>Information Security Analysis, Communication</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Website Development</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Database Administration</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>22.0%</b>
<b>Software Development, System Software</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16.7%</b>

**When the salaries for these occupations are accounted for it is evident that these jobs offer a great deal of financial security for workers possessing these skills.**

# TECHNOLOGY SALARIES

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<b>Field</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Entry/Experienced</b>
<b>Software Development Coding</b>	<b>\$40hr/ \$83,720yr</b>	<b>\$27.43hr/\$43.87hr</b>
<b>Information Security Analysis, Communications</b>	<b>\$29.79hr/ \$61,960yr</b>	<b>\$20.40hr/\$34.48hr</b>
<b>Website Development</b>	<b>\$26.51hr/\$55,140yr</b>	<b>\$15.41hr/\$32.00hr</b>
<b>Database Administration</b>	<b>\$31.64hr/\$65.810yr</b>	<b>\$21.34hr/\$36.95hr</b>
<b>Software Development, System Software</b>	<b>\$38.20hr/\$79,610yr</b>	<b>\$27.18hr/\$43.87hr</b>

# **PROGRAM SPECIFICS**

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**ONE YEAR OR 12 MONTHS IS THE AVERAGE PROGRAM LENGTH**

**PROGRAM GRADUATES WILL BE CERTIFIED AND JOB READY**

**COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES WILL BE ABLE TO WORK VIRTUAL**

# DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

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**Digital technology is an integral part of today's workforce. The 21st Century marketplace requires that communities have a workforce with discernible education and technological employment skills.**

**Technology, particularly, information and communication technology, is viewed as a potent force in transforming social, economic and political life across the globe. In many instances, the continuous development and application of technology has created vast new economic and employment opportunities.**



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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**A trained and skilled workforce is a valuable community asset that makes communities more attractive and competitive for economic growth and development. To address this technological challenge, there must be new development strategies that combine new technological capacity with investments in a broad variety of traditional and non-traditional economic sectors. These strategies need to be supported by improvements in education and advanced workforce development skill training. Training in the use and application of advanced technology is essential and a key step in taking advantage of emerging global economic opportunities.**

# **FUTURE WORKFORCE REQUIREMENTS**

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**A trained and skilled workforce is a valuable community asset that makes communities more attractive and competitive for economic growth and development. To address this technological challenge, there must be new development strategies that combine new technological capacity with investments in a broad variety of traditional and non-traditional economic sectors. These strategies need to be supported by improvements in education and advanced workforce development skill training. Training in the use and application of advanced computer technology is essential and a key step in taking advantage of emerging global economic opportunities.**

# RESEARCH QUESTION

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**How have economic, political, and social factors affected the type of workforce development training provided to residents in Southwest Mississippi communities?**

- **Southwest Mississippi is viewed as a region that is mainly populated with poor and uneducated people. This harsh assessment is borne out due to the lack of effort that Mississippi economic development officials has expended in this area. Southwest Mississippi is rich in agricultural land and commercial forests and this has directed the economic development efforts from local and state leaders. The fact that this area is home to a significant African American population has contributed to the lack effort regarding implementing new economic development strategies to revitalize Southwest Mississippi communities.**
- **The major factors that must be considered when examining the type of workforce development training provided to residents in Southwest Mississippi communities are race and educational attainment level. These factors are paramount because they clearly explain the lack of implementation of state-of-the-art workforce development training practices that would elevate the standard of living for residents in Southwest Mississippi.**

# Possible Policy Recommendations

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- (1) Provide residents who are: unemployed, underemployed, single-parent females and formerly incarcerated felons working in low-skilled occupations with advanced technology workforce development training to assist them in securing jobs that offer opportunities for financially rewarding lifestyles and a clear path out of poverty to break the cycle of chronically high unemployment and systemic pervasive poverty plaguing communities in Southwest Mississippi.**
- (2) Introduce advanced technology course material to students from K to 12th grade in all schools in Southwest Mississippi. This will be done to help students develop critical thinking skills and expose them to concepts that will lead to understanding and entering technological career areas that provide sustainable, financially rewarding employment.**
- (3) Establish relationships between academic institutions, business entities, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to develop programs and strategies that will address the issue of providing advanced technology workforce development training to residents of Southwest Mississippi.**

# CONCLUSION

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**The most efficient and best method to address the twin issues of chronically high unemployment and systemic poverty plaguing Southwest Mississippi communities and its residents is to provide them with advanced technology workforce development training that will allow them to secure sustainable employment that will create wealth for themselves and their communities.**

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